

ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD
9535 E. DOUBLETREE RANCH ROAD, SUITE 100, SCOTTSDALE, AZ 85258
PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039
VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

*If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a
separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian*

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: _____

Case Number: 18-51

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: Dr. Perez

Premise Name: VetMed

Premise Address: 20610 North Cave Creek Road

City: Phoenix State: AZ Zip Code: 85024

Telephone: (602) 697-4694

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Melissa Orr

Address: [REDACTED]

City: [REDACTED] State: [REDACTED] Zip Code: [REDACTED]

Home Telephone: [REDACTED] Cell Telephone: _____

*STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.

C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):

Name: Sweetpea
Breed/Species: Feline short hair
Age: 12 years Sex: Female Color: Tabby

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: _____
Breed/Species: _____
Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

Dr. Kelly Hehn, DVM at Canyon Animal Hospital 15411 North 31st, Phoenix, AZ 85022, (602) 971-9651 is Sweetpea's veterinarian.

Ryan Lunt, DVM attending at 1st Pet Veterinary Centers at 520 West Union Hills Drive Suite 105, Phoenix, AZ 85027, (623) 849-0700 saw Sweetpea 1/1/2018 at 12:52AM.

E. WITNESS INFORMATION:

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:

Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.

1. The VetMed facility was not sanitized or germ-free in the area where my cat was said to be "Crammed" in a kennel. I could smell the sick animals from where I stood in the hallway of the VetMed 24 hour facility. Eventually, I would be told that my cat was enclosed in an area where there were 22-25 sick dogs.
2. The veterinary staff on duty failed to perform veterinary duties in a professional, responsible and licensed manner.
3. The VetMed staff on duty answered the business phone call and misguided me about their veterinary services. Once inside, staff refused to reference me as the pet's owner or respect that I was traveling with the animal enclosed in the pet-stroller.
4. The staff failed to introduce the veterinary staff to establish a client patient relationship with me to begin any veterinary procedures, especially a procedure that would involve opening the pet-stroller's closure, removing the animal from my possession and furthermore placing the animal in a kennel where I was unable to see or get to, not even when I was attempting to refuse veterinary services at the VetMed clinic.
5. The veterinary staff removed the pet from the enclosed stroller deliberately without permission, and then lied, giving a false impression to me that the animal would indeed be returned to the stroller momentarily after weight measurement.
6. I had repeatedly demanded to any staff member that I saw working to have my animal returned to the waiting room area; I was denied the right to leave with my cat and refuse veterinary services, denied the right to comfort my cat when I heard her crying, denied the right to know where she was or to see her at all, denied any information as to why she was in a kennel with sick dogs barking all around her. The VetMed staff knew she could suffer a great deal from the unhealthy environment, lack of comfort, and the absence of sanitary conditions for enclosure for the animal.
7. The veterinary doctor never personally met me or saw me with any animal traveling inside the pet- stroller, especially my cat. I was led into an examining room without an animal where I met and shook hands with a Dr. Perez to discuss the presentation of what she thought ought to be as the clinic's medical procedures for me sign off on and the fees to pay and all without any identification of an animal. I asked Dr. Perez for my animal to be returned to me before discussing any treatment and/or costs and she told me to shut up so that she may go over her treatment plan without my animal present. As the pet owner, I was unaware of the need to have the pet removed from the pet-stroller prior to veterinary services.
8. The woman that introduced herself as I shook her hand in the examination room said she was Dr. Perez, but apparently she lied, because she is known by others to be Vanessa R. Serratore, DVM, Practice Limited to Surgery. In visiting the VetMed's website (VetMedaz.com), I scrolled down on the homepage, it was there I found a small picture positioned on the second row- four spaces over from the left that I did identify as being the woman that introduced herself to me as, Dr. Perez, and also the woman that told me to shut up (in the examination room).
9. I spent close to 4 hours in absolute panic trying to get my cat and leave. The VetMed veterinary staff returned Sweetpea to her pet-stroller soaked in her urine and unable to walk.

Please see attached documents.

Melissa Orr
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

1740 West Adams Suite 4600

Phoenix, AZ 85007

Phone: (602) 364-1738

Fax: (602) 364-1039

Vetboard.az.gov

ATTN: Tracy Riendeau

Email: tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

Dear Tracy,

Thank you for your time spent with me on the phone and helping me gather the needed correspondence for my complaint. Please call me if you have any questions. Have an excellent day.

The following is further develops the complaint form against the VetMed clinic.

1. The VetMed facility was not sanitized or germ-free in the area where my cat was said to be "Crammed" in a kennel. **I could smell the sick animals** from where I stood in the hallway of the VetMed 24 hour facility. Eventually, I would be told that my cat was enclosed in an area where there were 22-25 sick dogs.

2. **The veterinary staff on duty failed to perform veterinary duties in a professional, responsible and licensed manner.** I have a pet-stroller for my cat to travel in when going to all veterinary office visits. My cat was in her pet-stroller when entering the VetMed facility on 12/30/2017 at approximately 6:30PM. It was there in the waiting room where a staff member approached the pet-stroller from the side while my head was turned and removed my cat from the enclosed pet-stroller and began walking away with her towards the back of the facility and did so without saying a word. I immediately stopped him and told him to place my cat back into the pet-stroller as I reached out for him to give me my cat back. I saw a name tag on his shirt and called him by his name, Sean, and asked a second time for her back when he replied that he needed to get her weight. I said that I'll go with him and I started walking behind him with the pet-stroller and Sean stopped me and said that I

could not go with him, but that he would be right back with my cat to return her to me in the waiting area and back in the pet-stroller in one minute. I was very uncomfortable and was refusing that she be taken any where without me, especially being out of the pet-stroller. Sean stated again that it would be less than a minute before she would be returned. He lied. My cat was never returned to me back in the waiting room area, instead she was placed in a kennel and nobody said a word about it to me. So therefore, **I sat in the waiting room area all by myself without an animal or having my cat in her pet-stroller to proceed on to discuss with anybody why I was there in the first place or even to which animal I brought in to receive medical treatment, if any, from that facility.** The way the clinic's staff handled my animal and spoke to me was done in a rude, condescending manner. The staff's veterinary presence at work seemed to be inefficient, unprofessional and unsuitable in trait for a licensee to conduct business. **I can only visualize how threatened my cat Sweetpea was by the veterinary staff keeping her outside her pet-stroller.** Nothing was done in part to be a positive or productive experience to maintaining my pet's health or relieving the stress. **All I asked for was a shot of anti-biotic and nothing else.**

3. **The VetMed staff on duty answered the business phone call that I had placed and misguided me when I was seeking out the veterinary services offered inside the VetMed facility.** Once inside, staff refused to reference me as the pet's owner or respect that I was traveling with the animal enclosed in the pet-stroller. I would have never stepped foot into the VetMed 24 hour facility had they not **lied to me over the phone** when I first called to inquire of their veterinary services.

4. **The staff failed to introduce the veterinary staff to establish a client patient relationship with me to begin any veterinary procedures,** especially a procedure that would involve opening the pet-stroller's closure, removing the animal from my possession and furthermore placing the animal in a kennel where I was unable to see or get to even when I was attempting to refuse veterinary services at the VetMed clinic.

5. **The veterinary staff removed the pet from the enclosed stroller deliberately without permission, and then lied, giving a false impression** to me that the animal would indeed be returned to the stroller momentarily after weight measurement.

6. I had repeatedly demanded to any staff member that I saw working to have my animal returned to the waiting room area to be placed in the stroller by stating that the animal was never returned after weight measurement by Sean. In return, **I was denied the right to leave with my cat and refuse veterinary services, denied the right to comfort my cat when I heard her crying, denied the right to**

know where she was or to see her at all, denied any information as to why she was in a kennel with sick dogs barking all around her. The VetMed staff knew she could have suffered a great deal from the unhealthy environment, lack of comfort, and the absence of sanitary conditions by which served as enclosure for the animal taken by staff.

7. The veterinary doctor never personally met me, used my name or saw me with any animal traveling inside the pet- stroller, especially my cat. **I was led into an examining room without an animal** where I met and shook hands with a Dr. Perez to discuss the presentation of what she thought ought to be as the clinic's medical procedures for me sign off on and the fees to pay and all without any identification of an animal. **I asked Dr. Perez for my animal to be returned to me before discussing any treatment and/or costs and she told me to shut up so that she may go over her treatment plan without my animal present.**

8. **The woman that shook my hand in the examination room introduced herself as Dr. Perez, but in fact she lied to me too, because she is known by others to be Vanessa R. Serratore, DVM, Practice Limited to Surgery.** Online at the VetMed's website's (VetMedaz.com) homepage, I found two rows of staff pictures, it was there I found a small picture positioned on the second row- four spaces over from the left -that I immediately identified as Dr. Perez; (2nd row, 4 spaces from left) the woman that had introduced herself to me as Dr. Perez and to which also told me to shut up.

9. I could hear my cat being held against her will forcibly crying out from the waiting room, but the staff continually dismissed me when I questioned their actions and I felt that if I did not sit calmly, Sweetpea would suffer further. **The VetMed staff had locked Sweetpea in a kennel four hours and without my consent or authorization.** Sweetpea was forced somewhere onsite into a kennel, surrounded by barking dogs alone for reasons that remain unknown and the staff offered me no explanation for keeping my cat in the abusive kennel lock-down. I was the only pet owner there without a pet in the waiting room area. **When the VetMed veterinary staff finally returned Sweetpea to her pet-stroller, she was soaked in her urine and unable to walk using her hind legs.**

To Further Explain Before and After:

The VetMed 24 hour facility was called by me, Melissa Orr, on 12/30/2017 at approximately 6:00PM to inquire about the facility's veterinary services about getting my cat treated with a non-emergency at their 24 hour facility because my veterinary's office was closed. I explained to the gentleman answering the VetMed business call that my cat, Sweetpea (12 1/2

years old), needs a shot of -anti-biotic only- to relieve her temporary stress of urination (dribbling). I informed the gentleman of Sweetpea's urinary irritations to be currently controlled by Natural Pet Pharmaceuticals from the Vitamin Shoppe (homeopathic which was ideal) after having been administered anti-biotic in the past by her veterinarian because she is sensitive to cat litter products, however, because she has recently been through a dental surgery and had four of her teeth removed on 12/07/2017, she is still a little weak and recovering, so therefore the anti-biotic would be best to relieve her of the stress at this time during recovery. I made sure to state that she was still recovering from dental surgery and that I did not want her to be exposed to other sick animals if at all possible and asked if the VetMed clinic would be the right facility to handle my request for only the anti-biotic. I was certain that I made myself clear to Sweetpea's current health condition for traveling and that I was calling to make sure ahead of time that the anti-biotic could be administered as soon as possible so she could get back to sleep, out of the cold and away from sick animals. The gentleman said that he had checked with the staff on duty and if I was to leave now and have Sweetpea there in twenty minutes it could be done and that there was no one in the waiting room at that time.

I entered the VetMed 24 hour facility twenty minutes later, but I did not see a gentleman greeting or answering the phones, instead there was two or three ladies there that told me to fill out the form and handed me a clipboard and pointed to the seating area. I attempted to see if they were expecting me and said how I had just called and was told to be here in twenty minutes, but the staff ignored me and went about their business. I sat down by the front entrance and debated turning around and going home to call another 24 hour veterinary office. Before I knew it a gentleman had already opened the pet-stroller and had Sweetpea in his hands and started walking towards the back of the facility. I stopped him and asked for her back in the stroller and he said that he needed to weigh her and that she would be returned momentarily to me. I reached out to get Sweetpea back and notice he was wearing a name tag, Sean, and I asked Sean for her back as he promised it would be one moment to weigh her and promised again that she'd be back while walking away telling me that I could not go with him.

Sweetpea was never returned to me and I asked over and over for her. I could hear her crying and crying from the waiting room and no one cared about her or me. I was shoved around when I attempted to get back into where I thought she might have been and no one would tell me why she was taken permanently from her pet-stroller, to be somewhere in the facility that was out of sight and away from my possession. The crying from Sweetpea was horrible, and I was so stressed, crying myself about it. I could hear there were dogs barking, I could see dogs bleeding that were brought into the back facility where Sweetpea was taken but I had no idea where or

how Sweetpea was being held under duress. Two hours or more had gone by as I sat in the waiting area with an empty pet-stroller asking anybody to return my animal. Finally, I was informed by staff that Sweetpea had managed to get herself crammed into the corner of a kennel and was unhappy, and that would be how I became informed of how Sweetpea was being held under duress. That exact statement with "crammed and unhappy" would be what was told to me when I asked for my animal back by three separate persons staffed at VetMed that evening.

After three hours or so a woman staff had walked up to me (without establishing my name or any pet owned) and stood there in front of me and having to repeat telling me two or three times that I had to go into an examination room to meet with a veterinary doctor and stated the doctor's name as she turned for me to follow. From behind, I thought at first the woman staff stated quietly "Dr. Price" but repeated "Dr. Perez" twice as the veterinary doctor I was about to meet. I followed staff and entered the exam room where I noticed it was empty and asked to have my animal returned to me and I was told "no" by the woman staff as she left closing the examination room door facing north in the building. A few minutes later another woman entered the examination room using the door facing west in the building and introduced herself to me as Dr. Perez as I stood shaking her hand. Immediately I asked for my animal and was told "no" by Dr. Perez who had prepared the documents in her hand and expecting for me to approve. Dr. Perez continued on without hesitation to hand out a document that would represent a treatment plan with costs. I interrupted her speech to ask for my animal to be returned to me immediately. I was told to "shut up" by Dr. Perez because she wanted to go over a treatment plan with costs rather than listening to me asking for my animal back. I refused the treatment plan that Dr. Perez offered and continued to insist on having my pet returned to me, but she (Sweetpea) was not. Dr. Perez walked out the examination room angry to change the treatment plan that I refused because my animal was not present.

I returned by myself back to where I sat by the front door of the VetMed waiting room area. I never had Sweetpea with me the entire time spent inside the VetMed 24 hour facility, even as I was meeting with Dr. Perez a total of two times in an examination room with no animal present to discuss a treatment plan that was never needed. When Dr. Perez met with me in the examination room for the second plan, I accepted the fees on the basis that Sweetpea was returned to me and that the treatment would go untreated as I was refusing service and as I walked out of the exam room and around the corner to the front desk to pay, Sean was right there to put Sweetpea back into her pet-stroller, again without saying a word to me. I paid and left.

When I got home, I realized that Sweetpea had been severely traumatized by the VetMed visiting staff. Not only was she soaking wet in urine on her underside, but most

devastatingly, she was incapable of walking, her back and hind legs appearing to be hindered somehow. Now, she is not eating or drinking water.

In Addition: on 12/31/2017, just before mid-night, I had returned to VetMed 24 hour facility on my way to going to another 24 hour veterinary hospital regarding Sweetpea's incapacitation or the inability to walk from the hind legs-back. I wanted to inquire in person as to what happened exactly the night before inside their facility with my animal while she was out of her carrier or pet-stroller so that I may get her the proper attention. It was there, outside the clinic, where Sweetpea was taken from my possession again by the staff, but this time she was taken while lying in a bed that was made to be somewhat enclosed or domed with a handle on top in which the staff had grabbed while I locked my car. I witnessed staff members running down the VetMed hallway with Sweetpea enclosed in the bed until they were out of my sight. I entered the facility now only to demand my cat to be returned to me immediately! Another staff member came from the back of the facility holding the empty cat bed that Sweetpea had been in-only now holding the bed empty and up side down. **I was in a panic and no longer was I able to inquire of the previous evening**, but before I knew it, I was experiencing the same trauma from the VetMed's veterinary procedures once again, only now it was worse because Sweetpea was injured from the night before. What a total nightmare.

Being the only public inside the facility, I attempted to get Sweetpea from wherever she was in the back by my self without hesitating going the same way I saw others running with Sweetpea, but I was surrounded and stopped by the staff in the hallway that led to the back of facility. I am not for sure if there were three or four or even five staff members all around me acting inappropriately and behaving angry towards me as I was tried to get my cat out of their reach and out of their facility. **In the middle of begging for my animal back to the surrounding VetMed staff, I stopped and realized the smell coming from the back of the facility and I began stating out loud, "Can you all smell the sickness of the animals in the air? I can smell it from here. Can you smell the sickness from here? How many sick animals are here with my animal back there? And why were you running so fast to get my animal back there?"**

One of the staff members started asking another staff member as to whether it was 20 or 25 dogs that were sickly in the back. She then answered me by stating 22-25 sick dogs in the back where my animal had been rushed to be (and what I assumed) dumped out of the enclosed bed without my authority or even speaking to me, just as the night before, only now proving to be seen as animal cruelty that I had just witnessed. I raised my voice and asked for Sweetpea

back. I walked back towards the front desk where a woman was and asked her to call the other veterinary hospital for me, attempting to get another witness on Sweetpea's behalf. As I looked up, a staff member was walking from the back of the facility with having Sweetpea's lower body tightly twisted up in a dirty white towel that did not belong to me. She was glaring at me as she approached and I was scared for Sweetpea's sake of hurting her even further. Another staff had the enclosed bed that Sweetpea was dumped out of and put it on top of the front desk. **Without offering Sweetpea to me or loosening her grip on my cat, twisted up tightly with her top half frozen solid, the staff member walked past me and started to cram Sweetpea into the enclosed bed sitting on the counter and continued to cram her in, cramming with her fist the large white, dirty towel in after her, with her fist.** I leaned in to say that the towel was not mine and to see that Sweetpea did not get crammed anymore. I left weeping as Sweetpea then appeared to be failing. I witnessed the angry staff cram my silent animal 12/31/2017 and 12/30/2017 stating to me that Sweetpea had managed to cram herself in a kennel and was unhappy was the same behavior and demeanor of the staff witnessed.

I am writing this complaint after sending the following complaint letter to VetMed via online at vetmedaz.com under the contact us link. I also went personally to the VetMed location building #2 on 1/4/2018 and ended up speaking with Jennifer Lundal, Hospital Administrator, although I do not believe that it did any good on my behalf of Sweetpea. When I walked into the facility on 1/4/2018, it was about 11:45AM and I was told that Jennifer was on a conference call and to come back at 12:30PM. I had left Sweetpea at her veterinarian's office with Dr. Hehn because of her instability as I was at the VetMed clinic to complain. When I had returned to the VetMed building #2 at 12:45PM (after getting sick myself) Jennifer introduced herself to me as she was also explaining that she had just gotten off the phone with Dr. Hehn and that they were speaking of Sweetpea as we went into room # 4 to talk. I had brought with me an enlarged picture of the woman that had introduced herself to me as being Dr. Perez on 12/30/2017 at the VetMed 24 hour building # 1 and asked if she was Dr. Perez. Jennifer said no, and continued to tell me that Dr. Perez was listed on my billing statement as being the veterinary doctor. I told Jennifer the woman that introduced herself as Dr. Perez to me was the same woman in the enlarged picture and therefore, known to me as being Dr. Perez. Jennifer said nothing in return, so I asked if that seemed fraudulent for any wrong doing in performing services and handling my animal. I then asked Jennifer to get Dr. Perez (both ladies) to join us in the room to speak, but Jennifer seemed to be supportive of her staff and did not offer me any condolences for my grievance. Jennifer mentioned lastly to me that Sweetpea's dental surgery may have something to do with her problems, and she left it at that, instead of coming to terms

with my complaint of bad procedures and/or services from the staff at the VetMed 24 hour facility. **I was crying, but I asked for Sweetpea's veterinary bills to be covered because of the animal being removed from my possession by staff & the abuse I witnessed.**

Complaint letter sent online to VetMed:

Wednesday January 3, 2018

My pet, Sweetpea, has suffered tremendously inside your 24 hour facility, & I want to speak to the person(s) in charge of the staff working and the person(s) responsible for overseeing the proper intake, handling and the veterinary care of the animals seen at the **VETMED 24 HOUR** veterinary facility located in building #1.

The veterinary services in your 24 hour facility located in building # 1, on the night of 12/30/2017, proved to be absolutely horrible and your staff's veterinary actions proved to be most destructive, detrimental and debilitating to my little pet's health needs.

Your facility's kennel had my pet locked-up inside it for close to three hours (the entire vet visit) enclosed and unattended with dogs that were sick, bleeding and barking, and your veterinary staff refused to let her out, denied me access to see her, & kept her there locked-up in a kennel knowing that it was completely against my will. My pet was the only pet that I saw that had been brought into your facility that evening inside a pet carrier (cat stroller), and the only pet locked in a kennel, permanently removed from the waiting room area for good, separated and away from her owner, while all other pets were respectfully comfortable and seen remained with their owners.

I was in your waiting room, I could her crying aloud continuously and crying in the examination room (without an animal) while your staff was expecting me to respond to a treatment plan that would require me to entrust them; disregarding the life of my pet, an animal that was brought inside your facility sitting calmly, quietly, and as far as I was concerned, safely in her pet-stroller.

Not only did your kennel smell of sick animals, but on (12/31/2017), I personally witnessed your staff treat my precious cargo abusively transferring my pet around your facility to be locked-up in your filthy kennel (for the last time) & completely without a clue of her frail body as it was completely incapacitated; removing her (without my permission) out of the pet carrier/bed (she laid all day) only to be forcing her into your

kennel's sickly environment once again. I actually had to remind your staff of the smell of the sick animals and I was told by your staff that my cat was back in the kennel surrounded by 22- 25 sick animals. Mind you, all examination rooms were unoccupied and available to be utilized. Some of your staff stood in my way of retrieving my animal from your kennel & you had 22-25 sickly animals, which was never a healthy environment for my pet, ever. Your staff threatened my ability to find veterinary care outside of your building # 1.

However it may come to your attention, having never take notice that Sweetpea was incapacitated and unable to hold her self up to walk – tells me that she must have dropped to the kennel floor in front of your staff. How dare them.

You can contact me at [REDACTED] which is my home number. Melissa Orr is my name and Sweetpea is my pet I adopted from the Arizona Humane Society Campus of Compassion 12 ½ years ago with her given name Sweetpea.

* It was to be expected by your staff that Sweetpea was coming in to get antibiotic to relieve her urinary restraint because I called prior to visiting the VetMed location. Had it been normal business hours Sweetpea's vet visit would have been considered as routine and very quick as she is diabetic and seen on a regular basis.

I am prepared to enclose with this complaint all the records of veterinary visits/ bills that I have kept from Sweetpea's veterinary visits (including the past year) so that you may see that Sweetpea is well taken care of and that I am extremely active with her maintaining good health and having a good life. I adopted Sweetpea from the Humane Society's Campus for Compassion location and have always kept my promise to care for her. However, I have been left feeling like I have broken that promise upon entering the VetMed 24 hour facility for a simple procedure with anti-biotic that turned out to be a traumatic experience for her to bear and for reasons unknown to me. In addition, I have more detailed information to report about staff's odd behavior that I witnessed while sitting for four hours inside the VetMed clinic building # 1.

I also apologize if my complaint has parts within that were mentioned twice in passing. Sweetpea's behavior at home has changed traumatically and she now is afraid to be alone what so ever, which means that my time spent writing this complaint has been interrupted many, many times to accompany my Sweetpea.

Thank you for your time with my complaint regarding Sweetpea and the veterinary procedures that occurred. Please contact me at home ([REDACTED]) to speak with me further on the subject at hand. God Bless.

Yours truly,

Melissa Orr

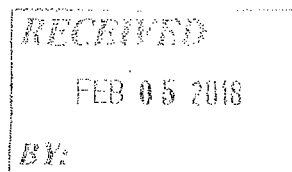
P.S. I will print the signature pages in the complaint to add my signature, scan and email them back to you as soon as possible to add for the report. Thanks again for your time, Melissa.

To: Members of the Arizona State Veterinary Examining Board

Regarding: "Sweetpea" Orr Case Number: 18-51

"Sweetpea" Orr, belonging to Melissa Orr, presented to VetMed on the evening of Saturday 12/30/2017. Ms. Orr was concerned because Sweetpea was observed dribbling urine, straining to urinate and going in and out of the litterbox. On presentation to VetMed she was triaged by Sean Unterdorfer, a veterinary technician. She was brought to the treatment area in her stroller and taken out to be evaluated. She was weighed and her vital signs were obtained. Her temperature was 105.1 on entry and I asked for her to remain in the treatment area for observation. She was placed in a kennel. Ms. Orr was given the stroller back without Sweetpea and there was no issue at that time with her staying in the treatment area for monitoring.

Sweetpea was quiet and alert on entry. Physical exam showed a mildly dehydrated, febrile patient. Her bladder was soft and small. No evidence of a lower urinary obstruction was identified. She was in the treatment area for about 2.5-3hrs before Ms. Orr was placed in an exam room. She had asked if Sweetpea could wait in the exam room with her. At that time Tanya Simpson, a veterinary technician, obtained the stroller from Ms. Orr and placed Sweetpea in it to wait with the owner in an exam room. When I spoke with Ms. Orr regarding Sweetpea, I introduced myself as Dr. Perez and shook her hand. She asked how Sweetpea was doing. I informed her that she had a fever and was therefore kept in a kennel in the treatment area for monitoring. Overall she was stable, but did appear somewhat scared in the kennel and preferred to stay in the back. Mrs. Orr informed me she was concerned Sweetpea has a urinary tract infection as she has had these symptoms previously. She was treated with an injectable antibiotic by her rDVM and did well. Ms. Orr was here for the same injection. Discussed my physical exam findings. The fever was concerning. I recommended bloodwork to evaluate organ function and see if there were any other underlying abnormalities. Ms. Orr expressed financial constraints due to a recent bill at her rDVM for dental work done for Sweetpea. About 3 weeks prior she had a dental cleaning and extractions. I had attempted to evaluate Sweetpea's mouth, but she would not allow it. The owner asked if any abnormalities were seen that could be attributed to this dental procedure. I informed Ms. Orr that I was unable to do a full oral exam, but there was no excessive salivation, halitosis or obvious pain around the mouth. Ms. Orr said she would prefer an antibiotic injection and she would follow up with her family veterinarian. I had my technician Tanya Simpson go over a treatment plan for a complete blood count and chemistry panel, pain medication, antibiotics and subcutaneous fluids so Ms. Orr could see the price of diagnostics and then make a more informed decision about how to proceed. She declined this treatment plan and communicated to Tanya that she needed treatment only due to cost concerns. The second treatment plan Tanya discussed was for subcutaneous fluids and Convenia (long-acting antibiotic injection). Ms. Orr approved this plan. Sweetpea was brought back into the treatment area in her stroller. She provided all medication in our treatment area. All injections were given subcutaneously and with minimal restraint. She was returned to her stroller clean, dry and able to walk. The stroller was then



given to Ms. Orr and Sweetpea was discharged. At the time of the visit Ms. Orr showed no signs of disgust, discontent or displeasure.

Ms. Orr returned to VetMed on 12/31 because Sweetpea had declined significantly. I am unable to speak to the events that took place at this visit as I was not working at the time and did not evaluate Sweetpea.

I have included the following documents for your review:

My complete medical record which was provided to Ms. Orr at the time of discharge.

Smartflow treatment sheet with initial vital signs

2 – Treatment options given to Ms. Orr, one of which she signed for authorization

Technician Sean Unterdorfer's statement regarding the events 12/30/2017

Technician Tanya Simpson's statement regarding the events 12/30/2017

Client Administrator Jennalee Odom's statement regarding the events 12/30/2017

Medical Record from the visit on 12/31/2017. She was seen by Joanna Dombeck, DVM.

Client Communication notes from the visit on 12/31/2017

Client communication notes from Ms. Orr's meeting with the Hospital Administrator, Jennifer Lundal

Thank you for your time,

Carmen Perez, DVM

Emergency Veterinarian at VetMed

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
- GOVERNOR -



VICTORIA WHITMORE
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

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VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: AM Investigative Committee: Robert Kritsberg, D.V.M. - Chair
Ryan Ainsworth, D.V.M.
Christina Tran, D.V.M.
Mary Williams

STAFF PRESENT: Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations
Victoria Whitmore, Executive Director
Sunita Krishna, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Case: 18-51

Complainant(s): Melissa Orr

Respondent(s): Carmen Perez, D.V.M. (License: 4883)

SUMMARY:

Complaint Received at Board Office: 1/17/18

Committee Discussion: 4/3/18

Board IIR: 5/16/18

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:

Laws as Amended July 2014

(Salmon); Rules as Revised September 2013 (Yellow).

On December 30, 2017, "Sweetpea," a 12-year-old female domestic short hair cat was presented to Respondent for straining to urinate and frequent urination. The cat was examined and diagnostics and treatments were recommended; Complainant declined diagnostics and approved SQ fluids and an antibiotic injection. The cat was discharged.

Complainant contends Respondent's conduct was unprofessional.

Complainant was noticed and appeared.

Respondent was noticed and appeared.

The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Melissa Orr*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *Carmen Perez, DVM*
- Consulting Veterinarian(s) narrative/medical record: *Joanna Dombeck, DVM*
- Witness(es) narrative: *VETMED Staff*

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On December 30, 2018, the cat was presented to Respondent due to straining to urinate and frequent urination. Hospital staff triaged the cat (the cat was taken to the treatment area in her stroller and removed to be evaluated) and found a weight = 5kgs, a temperature = 105.1 degrees, a heart rate = 170bpm and a respiration rate = 40bpm. Respondent requested staff to leave the cat in the treatment area for observation and was therefore placed in a kennel. Complainant was given the stroller back without the cat.

2. According to Complainant, hospital staff removed the cat from the stroller without her permission and was taken into the back to obtain a weight. The cat was supposed to be returned to her in the waiting area – she was not returned despite Complainant demanding the cat be returned. Hospital staff, Sean Unterdorfer, stated that he explained to Complainant that he would take the cat into the treatment area to obtain vitals, if there were abnormalities, the cat may remain the treatment area until evaluated by a doctor. According to Mr. Unterdorfer, Complainant was thankful, showing no displeasure with the plan. He obtained the cat's vitals, the cat remained in the treatment area for observation due to the elevated temperature, and the stroller was returned to Complainant. When Complainant was moved into an exam room, Mr. Unterdorfer brought the cat into the exam room and held her while Respondent examined the cat.

3. Respondent stated that the cat was in the treatment area for observation for 2.5 – 3 hours. Once Complainant was in the exam room, the cat was brought to her. Respondent relayed that she introduced herself to Complainant and informed her that the cat had a fever which is why she was kept in the treatment area. Complainant was concerned that the cat had a urinary tract infection as she had the same symptoms in the past and wanted the cat to be administered an antibiotic injection.

4. Respondent noted that the cat was mildly dehydrated, febrile and had a small soft urinary bladder. She recommended blood work to evaluate organ function and to see if there were any underlying abnormalities. Complainant expressed financial constraints as the cat had a dental cleaning and extractions approximately 3 weeks earlier. Respondent was not able to fully evaluate the cat's mouth but did not detect any abnormalities at that time. An estimate for diagnostics and treatment was presented to Complainant, which was declined due to cost concerns. Another estimate was offered for SQ fluids and an antibiotic injection; Complainant approved and the cat was administered the following:

- a. Lactated Ringer's Solution 300mg SQ; and
- b. Convenia 80mg/mL, 0.5mLs SQ.

5. Respondent stated in her narrative, that once the treatments were provided to the cat, she was returned to her stroller, clean, dry and able to walk. The stroller was given to Complainant and Complainant was discharged.

6. According to Complainant, when she arrived home, the cat was soaking in urine on her underside and could not walk.

7. On December 31, 2017, Complainant stated that she stopped at VETMED just before midnight

while on her way to another 24 hour emergency facility to have the cat evaluated for not being able to walk. Complainant reported that she wanted to ask in person what happened the previous evening. At this point, while outside of the premise, Complainant stated that the cat was taken from her possession by staff and she witnessed them running down the hall until they were out of her sight – she entered the premise and demanded her cat be returned to her.

8. Respondent was not working this evening and the cat was seen by her associate Dr. Dombeck.

9. Complainant advised Dr. Dombeck that the cat was seen that day by her regular veterinarian and was started on insulin, 1 unit twice a day. The cat had also been on meloxicam orally the past couple days. Complainant reported that the regular vet gave the cat an injection of insulin that morning and she gave another dose that evening – the cat had not eaten anything since the previous day. Dr. Dombeck documented that Complainant had medical records with her but would not let Dr. Dombeck have copies.

10. Dr. Dombeck evaluated the cat and noted the cat was disoriented, lethargic, meowing, able to sit sternal, slow to respond to interactions, and not able to stand. She was concerned this was due to hypoglycemia and recommended diagnostics and treatment. Complainant declined all testing, treatment and full exam; she wanted to take the cat to another emergency facility. Dr. Dombeck had administered 10mLs of 50% dextrose on the cat's gums. Complainant was not charged and was encouraged to seek medical care for the cat immediately.

11. Later that evening, the cat was presented to 1st Pet Veterinary Centers and received treatment.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee discussed that there were two opposing stories with this case and it appears that most of Complainant's concerns were with hospital staff conduct and premise issues.

Hospital staff submitted statements corroborating Respondent's narrative and information documented in the medical record.

COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:

The Committee concluded that no violations of the *Veterinary Practice Act* occurred.

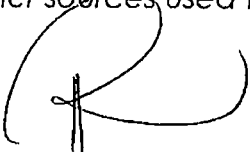
COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:

Motion: It was moved and seconded the Board:

Dismiss this issue with no violation.

Vote: The motion was approved with a vote of 4 to 0.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Riendeau', written over a horizontal line.

Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division